

REMARKS

The rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP 63-309273 (Miyahara et al) in view of JP 10-072313 (Horiike et al), is respectfully traversed.

As recited in above amended Claims 1 and 5, the invention is a fiber processing agent used for processing a surface of a fiber, comprising:

a water-soluble eggshell membrane; and a reactive organic compound having a reactive group, wherein the reactive organic compound contains one or more of the following components 1) through 4) for Claim 1, or contains one or more of the following components 1) through 5) for Claim 5:

component 1: a hydrophilic compound having a polymerizable vinyl group in the molecule,

component 2: a monomer containing any of a hydroxyl group, a carboxylic group, an amino group, a sulfonic group, and a phosphate group,

component 3: a hydrophilic compound having an epoxy group,

component 4: a compound having an aziridine group,

component 5: a compound containing an isocyanate group or a precursor thereof.

As previously pointed out by Applicants, the powdery eggshell membrane of Miyahara et al is **not** water-soluble because if it was, it would not have to be dispersed, and there is no disclosure or suggestion therein to process their powdery eggshell membrane to make it water-soluble.

In addition, Miyahara et al neither discloses nor suggests the presence of a reactive organic compound in their powdery eggshell membrane or in the sheet like shell membrane formed by bonding the powdery eggshell membrane to meshes of entangled fibers. Any additional compounds disclosed by Miyahara et al, to the extent they are polymeric, are compounds obtained after polymerization.

Horiike et al, which was cited as an "A" reference in the International Search Report for the corresponding international application, does not remedy the above-discussed deficiencies in Miyahara et al. The Examiner relies on Horiike et al for its disclosure of a water-soluble shell membrane, which is described therein as produced by the treatment of a shell membrane of an avian egg with an acid, alkali, oxidizing agent, reducing agent, enzyme, etc. However, once the water-soluble shell membrane is formed in Horiike et al, there is no disclosure or suggestion therein of combining it with a reactive organic compound having a reactive group and selected from the various components now recited in the above-amended claims. Thus, even if Horiike et al were combined with Miyahara et al, the result would still not be the presently-claimed invention.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

All of the presently-pending claims in this application are now believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

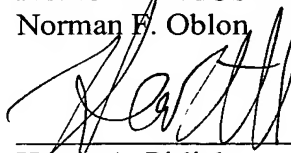
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